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VALLEY STAR

THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE

VOLUME 68, ISSUE NO. 2 FEBRUARY 20, 2008 IT'S *YOUR* NEWSPAPER

Financial Aid Not Only For Tuition

BY SHANNON MCHUGH
STAFF WRITER

There is a common misconception that Valley College only provides students with fee waivers when they register and pay for classes; the truth is that the Financial Aid Office offers a number of school, state, and federal programs to assist students in pursuing their educational goals.

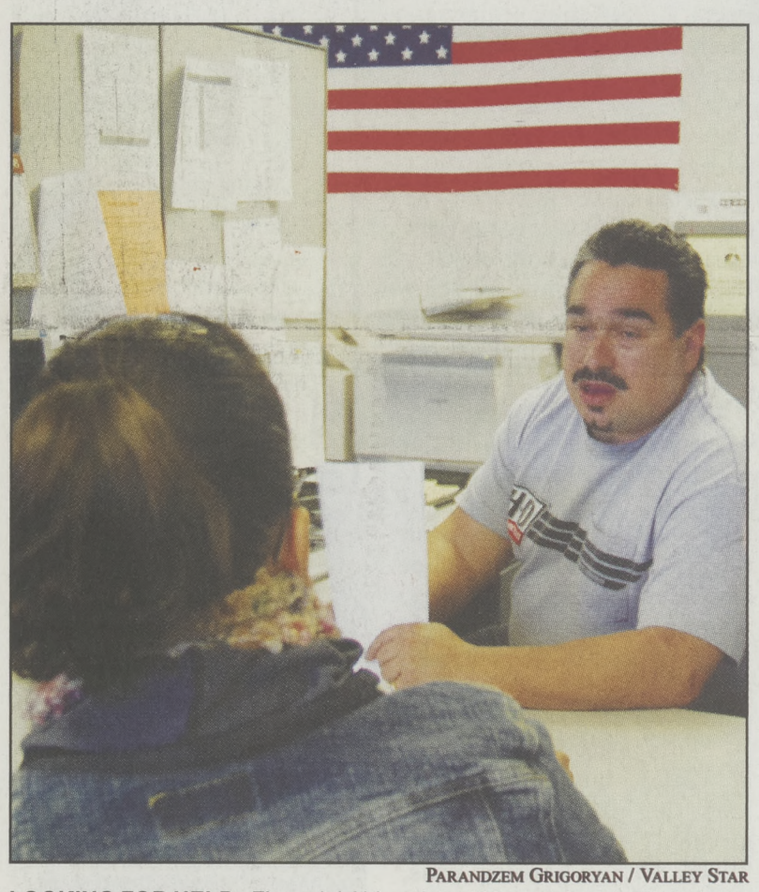
"Our office has been busy this year," said Barbara Ralston, director of financial aid at Valley, "but there is still a wealth of need on this campus and we are trying to use all the vehicles we have to get the word out that financial aid is more available than most think."

The Financial Aid department has been trying to make the process more accessible to students with hopes that they will see that they can benefit from stopping by. They have been advertising the benefits of financial aid early this semester, putting up posters in strategic locations with high student traffic and having all the applications ready in early January.

The department also tried something new this year – teaming up with the Foundation Office and sending out an automated phone call to all enrolled students discussing financial aid and scholarship help, which significantly increased the number of people interested. Still, many students have been unclear about what offers are available to them.

"I thought financial aid was just here to pay for classes,"

see *Aid* page 2



PARANDZEM GRIGORYAN / VALLEY STAR

LOOKING FOR HELP - Financial Aid assistant Marcus Anastasi is helping nursing student Cynthia Silva who is seeking for support for her studies.

VALLEY'S OWN "STEPS UP"

PAUL OLDEN, PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

READY FOR HER CLOSE-UP - Former Valley College student Briana Evigan is one of the stars of the new dance movie "Step Up 2 the Streets", which opened as the third largest money-maker over the President's Day weekend. The movie, a sequel to 2006's "Step Up," made approximately $26 million. See Valley Life, page 4 for the full story.

Bill Could Reduce Cost of Education

BY ELIZEDA BELTRAN
STAFF WRITER

The House of Representatives approved legislation Feb. 7 that would make college more affordable for students by reining on rising college tuition and making students educated consumers of higher education.

The House approved the College Opportunity and Affordability Act by a bipartisan vote of 354-58. If the bill becomes law, the U.S. Department of Education would create a website that would allow students and parents to compare prices of institutions. The website would list colleges according to tuition costs.

"For too many years, the cost of a college education has been spiraling out of control and closing the doors of higher education to aspiring students," said House Education and Labor Committee Senior Republican, Rep. Howard P. 'Buck' McKeon (R-CA). "Despite a considerable federal investment, colleges and universities have continued to push tuition upward."

The Department would publish a list of all U.S. colleges, separated into most expensive, least expensive, and those whose tuition has been going up, who would then have to explain the reason for the increase.

The bill would address rising college costs by creating incentives in the form of need-based grants for those institutions who keep prices low.

"For too many years, the cost of a college education has been spiraling out of control...."
- Rep. Howard McKeon

"For me it's a real challenge [paying for tuition], I have a family to support," said Jenny Drew, a Valley student.

With lower prices, Drew believes the "the possibilities are much greater."

Since borrowing money plays a big part in post-secondary education, the bill would require colleges to disclose their relationship with lenders, and ban gifts and revenues between the two bodies to avoid conflict of interest.

"Colleges need to make sure things are done in the benefit of the students, and perks have

see *Debt* page 2

Enrollment On The Rise

BY SHANNON MCHUGH
STAFF WRITER

Valley College has experienced a 5 percent increase in student enrollment since spring 2007, which may be increasing revenue for the school, but it is also causing students to experience crowded parking lots and limiting their ability to add the classes they need.

Los Angeles Community College District reports show that 16,612 students are attending Valley this semester, which is a jump from the 15,799 students enrolled last year at this time. Faculty and staff are thrilled with the comeback student enrollment is making, especially with the poor numbers the last couple of years.

"We are up," said Florentino Manzano, dean of enrollment management. "And, the faculty are playing a big role in the increase."

Manzano explained that a faculty team that was put together to increase enrollment was working hard with a number of plans to get the word out about Valley. Part of this includes continued expansion on the scope of local advertising, incorporating more cable television commercials and print advertisements.

"It's not just about advertising, though," he continued. "[Valley President] Tyree Wieder has implemented her One-Stop Registration process and nine-point plan this year to make sure we have the right courses being offered at the right times.

see *Enrollment* page 2

Student Survival Guide- Tips You Need to Know

BY BRAD TAYLOR
MANAGING EDITOR

Spring semester is well underway at Valley College and whether you are a new student or in your fourth year, I have some helpful tips that can help everyone survive their educational experience.

1-Parking.

If you are reading this, but haven't bought a campus-parking pass, chances are you may have a ticket on your vehicle now. Valley gives students a two-week grace period to get their parking passes, and that expired on Tuesday. Do yourself a favor and shell out the $20 before you have to pay for a $30 ticket.

On the subject of parking, save yourself a headache and pick a lot that is not full. I see cars driving up and down the busiest lots close to their classrooms with no chance of finding a place with only minutes before class is scheduled to begin. Just park in one of the outer lots where you know there will be spaces; it will save you time and give you some exercise!

2-Student Identification

I went three semesters without even knowing we had student identification cards available, but if you plan on using one of Valley's many computer labs or getting math or biology help, you will need this handy card to get in the door.

The card is free and by this time the lines will be much shorter in the Administration Building, where they are available to everyone registered this semester. The I.D. can also be used at places like "The Apple Store" to get student discounts on MacBooks and software.

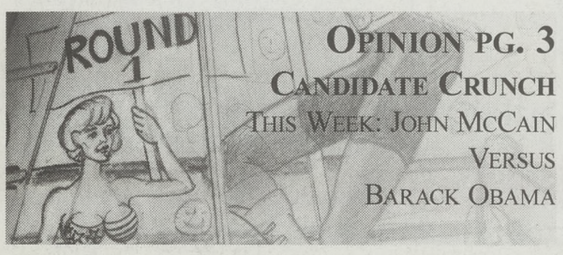
MANYA MARTIROSYAN / VALLEY STAR

A PLACE TO AVOID - Parking lot A at Valley College always seems to be full, parking in other lots can help relieve congestion.

3-Books

A student's biggest cost these days is their textbooks. And Valley's bookstore offers all the books you need, if they are in stock. Do yourself a favor and use your new student I.D. to use a school computer and order all your books online and get it out of the way

see *Student Tips* page 2



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NEWS

'Aid'

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said Lucy Mejia, a first-semester Valley student waiting in line at the Financial Aid office. "The FAFSA is not easy to fill out, but it's worth it if it can help with cost of books and other things for school."

With the end of this school year nearing, many are also skeptical that they can still receive financial aid for the 2007-2008 year, a skepticism that was quickly negated by Ralston.

"Students are still eligible to apply for financial aid for the 2007-2008 school year," she said. "The deadline for this year is May 15, although we encourage students to get their applications in as soon as possible."

That is an encouragement that the staff sends to anyone applying for any type of financial aid. The deadline for 2008-2009 financial aid is Jun. 30, but the state-funded Cal Grant deadline is March 2. Applying before the posted deadlines for these programs can prove to be beneficial because of their limited amount of funds available, according to Ralston.She also warned that applying late could risk students' chances of receiving the funds distributed.

The team at the financial aid office is dedicated to helping students understand the process and can assist in the application process as well. With an application and about 15 minutes, students could be on their way to saving on their educational expenses.

"Financial aid is not hard to get and the application is free to fill out," said Ralston. "With that said, you really have nothing to lose."

PAUL OLDEN. PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

ANIMALS HELPING ANIMALS - This Border Collie was used by a man who was seeking signatures near Monarch Square Monday, Feb. 19. The proposed ballot measure is aimed at increasing state penalities for acts of animal cruelty.

'Student Tips'

continued from page 1

as quickly as possible.

Another solution to your book problems could be the school library. Many professors have copies of their textbooks available in the library, which will also encourage you to actually sit down and read in a quiet environment.

4-Financial Aid

As students, we are often strapped for funds after paying hundreds of dollars for textbooks and tuition; Valley offers a wide variety of financial aid opportunities for every level of student. Thousands of dollars go unclaimed every year because students think they will not qualify for assistance. Just go to the financial aid office and ask any of the friendly folks there for the next step you need to take.

For students who already know your majors, ask your professors if they know of scholarships available in your area of study. You will be surprised at how many foundations offer money to students who have chosen a certain career path.

5-Student Health Center

You may be wondering why you paid a student health fee. Well, it is because Valley offers enrolled students basic health services right on campus, or any other college in the district.

You can call (818) 947-2918 for an appointment and get information on various testing, physical exams and preventative care. There is also a Clinical Psychologist on staff to help students as well as referral services.

'Debt'

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always gotten in the middle," said Florentino Manzano, dean of enrollment management. But "students also need to be good consumers... and get a pretty good loan. Most students don't do the research, [they think]whatever is the easiest will do."

Lenders would be required to first inform student consumers about their federally backed loans. Applying for financial aid would also become easier, through the bill's reworking of the application process for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid by encouraging the U.S. Department of Education to decrease the number of questions in the application over the next five years.

"The actual process is quite convoluted and lengthy, it makes sense to try to reduce it," said Manzano. The price of college text books is also targeted. The bill would require publishers to disclose the cost of books when they are sold to faculty, as well as making publishers sell their books unbundled, which increases the price.

The bill will have to merge with the Higher Education Amendments, a similar bill that passed the Senate in July 2007.

'Enrollment'

continued from page 1

We've been working hard to make the school a more welcome atmosphere for students, and it has increased enrollment."

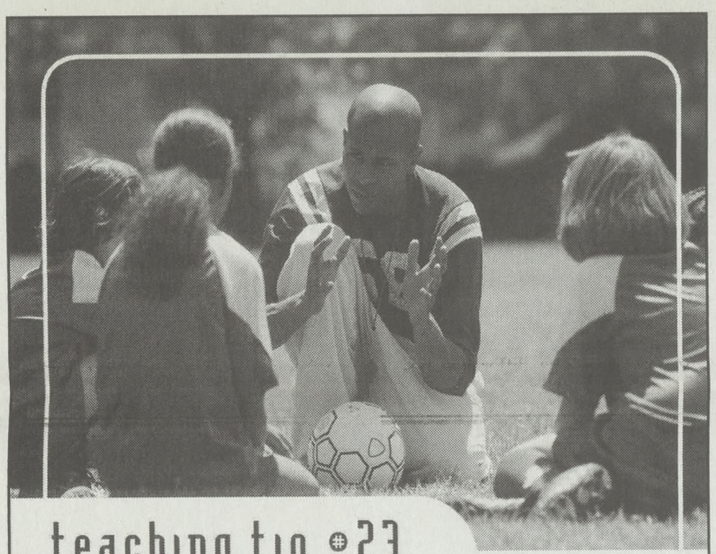
Duane Martin, administrative analyst for academic affairs, explained that it may look like there are more people on campus, but that doesn't mean they are necessarily taking up a full load of classes.

"This is another reason why you may be seeing more people around campus than last semester or last year," he said. "Students are not necessarily taking more classes, but there are more students taking classes in general, even if they are just taking one or two classes."

Although the benefits of increasing enrollment seem endless to the faculty and staff, students are still left with some frustration toward the growing number of students attending Valley. Among other difficulties, many students cannot add the more popular general education courses.

"This is my first semester at Valley, but I have realized the parking problems already," said Scott Moon. "Even with a parking pass, it is really hard to find any parking on campus because of the number of people here during my class hours."

While the enrollment team can rest easy because of these rising numbers, students may have to continue to acclimate to the increased population around campus.



teaching tip #23

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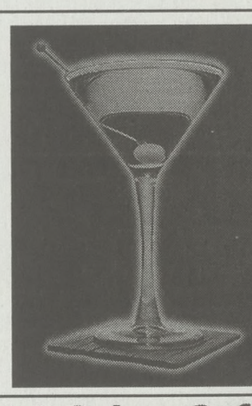

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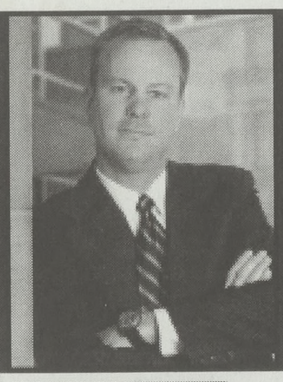

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Campus Crime

Campus Incident - On Feb. 3 between 7:30 p.m. and 10:20 p.m., a trash bin was vandalized in Parking Lot C. There are no witnesses or suspects.

Staff Injury - On Feb. 5, around 10:30 a.m., a shelf filled with books in the bookstore rack room fell on a faculty member's left wrist and forearm.

Burglary - On Feb. 5, between 6 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. in Lot G, tools were stolen out of a vehicle. No arrests have been made.

In Lot D on Feb. 5 at 1:10 p.m., there was a collision involving a student's vehicle and one of the school's golf carts on Campus Drive. No injuries were reported.

Traffic Collision - In Lot C on Feb. 6 at 9:10 p.m., there was a traffic collision. No injuries were reported.

Student Injury - While in the Admissions/Library building on Feb. 7 at 11:00 a.m., a student felt dizzy and was transported to the campus health center. He was treated and shortly released.

OPINION

CANDIDATE CRUNCH

PART ONE OF A TWO PART SERIES. THE VALLEY STAR STAFF EXAMINE THE NATION'S POTENTIAL NOMINEES
THIS WEEK: **JOHN MCCAIN AND BARACK OBAMA ENTER THE SQUARED CIRCLE**

McCain Means Business

BY BRAD TAYLOR
MANAGING EDITOR

In the neck-and-neck race against Democratic Sens. Barack Obama of Illinois and Hillary Clinton of New York, Arizona Sen. John McCain is the Republican party's secret weapon to win your vote.

The 2008 presidential election primaries have become a battlefield where the word change is thrown around like so many coins in a fountain; the Democratic forces are torn between two candidates who keep fighting a war of words where neither is saying anything.

Over in the Republican camp, John McCain has been letting his rivals attack each other while he has quietly eliminated every challenger who underestimated him. His own party fears him and his unusual straightforward approach to politics.

Putting aside all the generic rhetoric of the debates, it really comes down to what makes a good president of the United States.

Our greatest leaders have served in the armed forces and seen first hand the horrors of combat, but out of all the current presidential frontrunners, only McCain has served his country in the military. The senator was a member of the U.S. Navy from 1958-1981 as a captain, earning a Silver Star, Purple Heart, Bronze Star and Legion of Merit awards, among a slew of other decorations.

McCain makes no apologies for who he is, a living G.I. Joe doll, who is not perfect and often cited for making off-color remarks about other races and even his fellow Senators. McCain went so far as to tell Rep. John Murtha (D-PA) to "lighten up and get a life" when he was attacked for a statement he made to Jon Stewart on "The Daily Show."

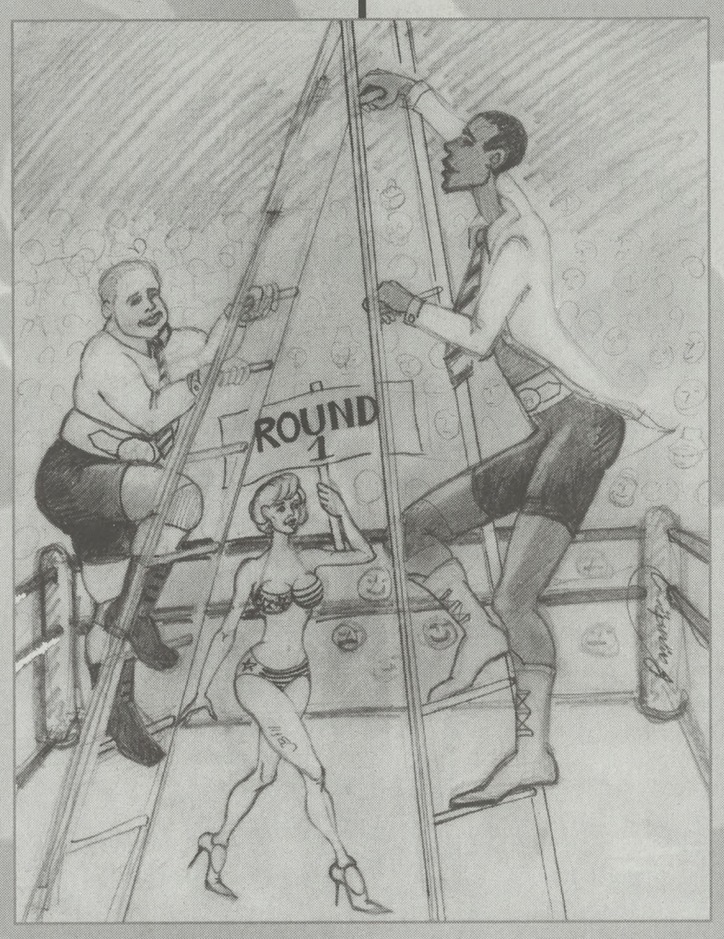
In a time where almost everyone is skirting the topic of immigration, McCain has openly made it a priority to deal with the issue, butting heads with Texas Sen. John Cornyn, who tried to chastise the presidential hopeful for challenging the number of appeals illegal immigrants could receive. McCain's reply was, "F*** you."

In a country where publicists seem more in control of a candidate's image than the candidate themselves, a man who speaks his mind is invaluable. While it's nice to cry on cue and preach to the choir, it means much more to show in past actions that you fought for America, not just pay lip service to what the young voters think they want to hear.

The "maverick" Senator is riding what he calls the "straight talk express," not sugar coating harsh truths that we need to hear. Yes, we want our troops out of Iraq, but the reality is that the current administration has sealed our fate and tied it to the Middle East, and McCain knows that wishful thinking won't get anyone home any faster.

It is true that every vote counts and, as an American, it is your job to be informed on all the candidates, not just the ones who look good on a poster or say all the right things. There are choices beyond Hillary and Barack; issues don't need to be black or white, male or female.

For our country, it is time to look beyond the words Republican or Democrat, and see who is being honest, and who keeps changing their ideals to blend in with their surroundings. John McCain is flawed, pig headed and angry in his pursuit to build a better America. In short, he is everything that makes this country great and he deserves a second look.



COURTESY OF PARANDZEM "PAULA" GRIGORYAN

Obama, Harbinger of Change

BY WILL REYES
EDITOR AT LARGE

America is a country built on revolution. The first Americans, tired of a government that wasn't in touch with them and didn't truly represent their voice, united town by town and rose together to face an overwhelming challenge in the name of change.

The hope and courage of the first U.S. patriots and the faith American civil rights activists maintained throughout every loss and hardship of their struggle is the very essence of what created this nation and of every achievement since its birth.

As we inch closer to the November 2008 presidential elections, Americans once again have an opportunity to reclaim their country and write a new chapter in history. Presidential hopeful Sen. Barack Obama is the candidate best suited to make that change.

"This is a defining moment in our history," Sen. Obama said in his Plan for America, outlining his stance on national issues. "Our nation is at war … the dream that so many generations fought for feels as if it's slowly slipping away."

"We have a chance to bring the country together in a new majority," he said. "To finally tackle problems that Washington has ignored for too long. And that is why the same old Washington textbook campaigns just won't do in this election."

Obama traveled across the country spreading his message of a new type of White House politics, sparking a level of momentum that has catapulted him to wins in the last eight primaries and front-runner status in the race for the Democratic nomination.

They call him a hope-monger. They say he's a show horse who has no substance and is fooling America, effectively casting everyone who has voted for him into the category of fools.

Despite the cynical words of so many critics, his support isn't a case of blind sheep writing a blank check to a candidate known for making empty promises. The difference between the Obama campaign and those of his rivals is the source of his funding. While Sens. Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and John McCain (R-Ariz.) receive generous support from corporate interests, Obama's lifeblood comes from a vast pool of average American donors, totaling nearly $40 million in January alone.

"It's time to put government back in your hands, where it belongs," Sen. Obama said.

The determining factor that separates him from both Clinton and McCain is his sincere belief in the power of the people they pledge to protect. That basic American ideal appears to be foreign to his opponents, as Sen. Clinton made clear in her latest attack.

"There's a big difference between us – speeches versus solutions, talk versus action," she said at a campaign stop in Ohio. "Speeches don't put food on the table. Speeches don't fill up your tank or fill your prescription or do anything about that stack of bills that keeps you up at night."

She seems unaware of the difference between the empty talk lifelong politicians like her are so versed in, and the genuine belief that inspirational words in a time of crisis can unite a group fed up with their current government. It worked during this country's creation, and the odds were much worse then.

It's time for Americans to stand up and demand a new direction once more. No more supporting politicians who simply tell Americans what to do, instead of asking for their input. As Sen. Obama said in one of his many victory speeches, "We are who we've been waiting for."

Worst Pickup Line Conceivable: A Bay-Bay, HONK HONK 'SUP

BY SHANNON MCHUGH
STAFF WRITER

Every woman who walks down the street in the Los Angeles area experiences the bizarre contemporary form of courting that is sweeping the city and abroad, a wooing that is slowly becoming a common occurrence in Valley College parking lots.

Forget flowers and love notes, ladies; the new way men have decided to show admiration for a woman involves blaring music, whistling and horn honking. The ritual leaves me and the rest of the female population wondering who thought that this would be an effective way to meet women?

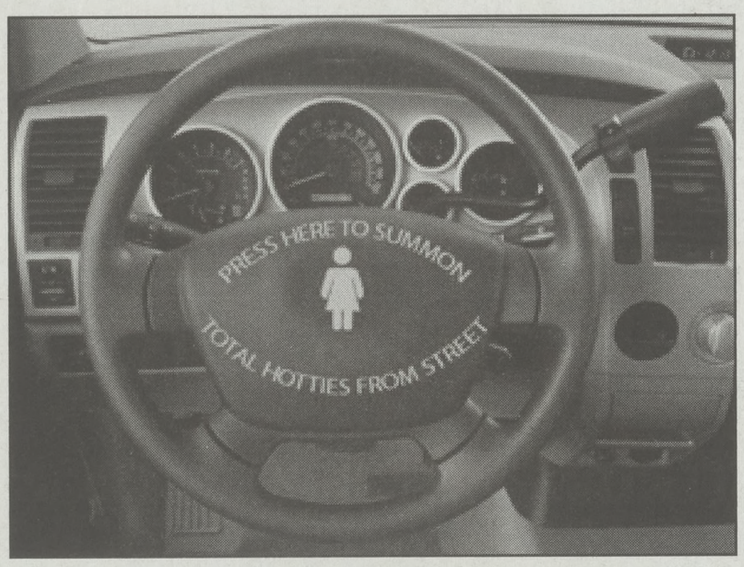


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION / JAMES BENNETT / VALLEY STAR

This happened to me recently and my story may sound all too familiar to some. I was walking down the school parking lot when suddenly I found myself accosted by blaring music of a rap persuasion coming from a car behind me. As the bass surged through my eardrums, I glanced over my shoulder to see how close I was to being pulverized by the Ford F-250 truck speeding in my direction.

Before I could move to safety, the truck slowed, windows rolled down to reveal a male driver and at least two men in the back seat. I heard the horn honk, followed by a slew of hollering and whistling before the young man in the passenger seat mustered up the guts to yell, "A Bay Bay," and lick his lips in my direction.

Flabbergasted, I chose to keep walking, ignoring the situation completely. What exactly did he expect me to do, squeal with glee that someone used a Hurricane Chris song to beckon me into a conversation while jumping in his car and driving away with him, his friends and the blaring rap music into the sunset? Hardly.

I'm not the only woman who does not understand men's motivation for this behavior. In fact, every one of the ten women I spoke with used signature phrases such as "annoying" or "ridiculous" to explain their thoughts on the issue.

"Oh, God. I hate that," Valley student Marissa Meyer loathed. "It happens any time I walk down the street. I don't know why men do it. They just need attention, I guess."

Men seem to think that this is a way to give women attention, however, not the other way around. Journalism major DeAngelo Hicks explained his rationale. "I've probably done it once or twice," he said. "It's just to give her a bit of attention, to show her that she was doin' her thing that day."

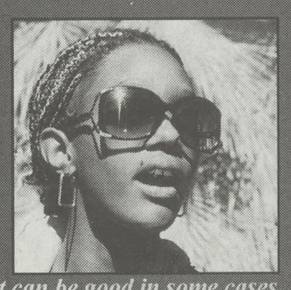
Tatevik Aslanian explained that it isn't always about looking great. A woman does not even need to be dressed to the nines to receive this "compliment." "A girl could be in sweatpants and no make-up and still get honked at," she said. "It's really bad when I'm coming back from the gym."

I have yet to find one person who has gotten a date by honking, and I doubt I ever will. The response was unanimous; women detest this kind of serenading from men, yet men continue to do it. For every woman I spoke with who opposes this type of behavior, there was one man who has done it at least once, and that ratio is the reason why men are not gaining any romances from these endeavors.

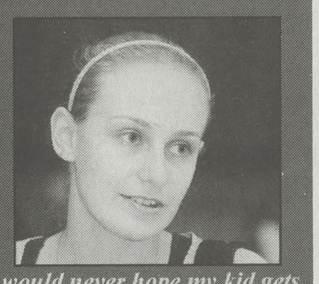
Here is my advice for the men of Valley: get out of your car, walk up to the woman in question, and speak to her like a normal person. Even starting up a conversation with a goofy one-liner such as, "So, do you come here often?" will make a better impression than trying to yell out an out-dated rap song and bark at her like a dog. Trust me.

CAMPUS View

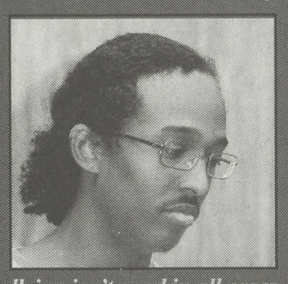
Does bullying build character?



"It can be good in some cases, but in others it can be detrimental to their character. It could be the push a person needs."
-Janiera Hill, criminal justice



"I would never hope my kid gets bullied, there are other, saner ways to build character."
-Sarah Malecki, interior architechure



"Bullying isn't good in all cases, it lowers students self esteem, makes them live in a miserable condition. However, it can build charisma."
-Yasir Alsomacil, business information

photos by Paul Olden / Photo Editor / Valley Star

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

As President of Los Angeles Valley College, I want to assure all students, faculty and staff that racial profiling on this campus is not condoned and will not be tolerated. This issue was brought to my attention on Tuesday evening, February 12, at which time I thought the incident had occurred that evening. The next morning I learned that the incident actually took place on January 10, 2008.

I immediately requested a copy of the incident report. I also asked to meet with the Deputy and placed a call to the student to discuss the incident. I have verified (as reported in the Valley Star) that the Sheriff's department is conducting an investigation in response to Mr. Eddie's complaint. I will be meeting with the Sheriff's Office when that investigation is complete to determine the next steps on the part of the college.

As college president, I am personally looking into this matter to ensure that all the facts are presented and the issue will be appropriately dealt with. Again, I want to assure our students, faculty and staff that even a hint of racial profiling is not acceptable behavior and will not be tolerated at Los Angeles Valley College.

Tyree Wieder. President, Valley College

Bullying is Bogus

BY ASTRID SEIPELT
NEWS EDITOR

Throughout our many years of schooling, there are many 'rites of passage' we go through – our first day of elementary, prom, graduation. Unfortunately, another trial some endure is the horrible experience of being bullied.

Some may argue that being picked on builds character, or is something that every child needs to experience. This is a train of thought shared by actress Reese Witherspoon, who said in a recent interview, "Those are sort of formative experiences. I wouldn't want my children to miss out on any of that teasing and bullying. Don't you think it kind of makes you who you are?"

This is all well and good, and may certainly be true for some youngsters, but what about children who are the target of continuous bullying? Rather than being a positive experience, this harassment can cause significant mental harm that can affect a victim for years to come.

As someone who was bullied throughout elementary school and into junior high, I can say that it was never a positive experience. I never really fit in, and was picked on for everything from my unusual name, my academic ability and the classic 'being the new kid at school.' It got so unbearable that I would beg my mother to keep me home from school so I could avoid another day of torment.

I know now, a decade after the bullying ceased, that it wasn't my fault. There was nothing wrong with me, and the perpetrators were nothing more than people who preyed on others to make themselves feel better. But what child knows that? All a child knows is that words hurt and is bewildered as to why they are the targets of such stinging barbs.

I understand why Ms. Witherspoon may think that a little bit of bullying is a positive experience – it prepares you for a world in which everything doesn't go your way and not everyone will be nice to you. But to make such a broad statement like she did is ignorant, especially of those whose lives have been negatively affected by such harassment. Encouraging behavior in which it is acceptable to make others feel like outcasts is simply irresponsible.

Bullying may be an everyday occurrence, but it doesn't make it right. The only comfort for those being picked on is that it will not last forever, and it is possible to rise above it. Let's just hope that no one else speaks out in favor of this awful childhood habit.

VALLEY LIFE

WHAT'S NEW @ LAVALLEYSTAR.COM

Students Survival Guide
By Brad Taylor

Computer Lab Offers Smiles and Study
By Will Reyes

Top 5: Healthy Foods
By Diana Quezada

American I-Dull
By Brad Taylor

TOP 5 STORIES @ LAVALLEYSTAR.COM

Student Files Racial Profiling Complaint
By Will Reyes

Chinatown Welcomes Year of the Rat
By Juan Robles and Graciela Salgado

Websites You Should Know About But Don't
By James Bennett

Envirochic, I'd Like You to Meet Groceries
By James Bennett

California Votes in the Race to the White House
By Kristen Becker

LAVC EVENTS

Wednesday, February 20, 2008

Free Wednesday Concert - Faculty/Student Variety Show @ 1 pm (Music 106); Admission: Free - Contact: Music Dept (818) 947-2347

Lunar Eclipse Observation Session @ 6-8 pm (LAVC Main Entry Walkway); Admission: Free - Contact: LAVC Astronomy Group (818) 947-2335

Classes Begins for Professional Paralegal Academy – Contact: Community Education & Extension Program (818) 947-2577, ext. 4172

Academic Senate Mtg. @ 1-3 pm (Faculty Lounge) – Contact: Don Gauthier (818) 947-5514

Friday, February 22, 2008

Pacific Southwest Collegiate Forensics Association's Speech Tournament @ 3 pm-8 pm (Monarch Hall / Fireside Room / Campus Center 104 / Cafeteria Conference Room / Faculty Lounge) - Contact: Duane Smith (818) 947-5537

Saturday, February 23, 2008

Pacific Southwest Collegiate Forensics Association's Speech Tournament @ 8 am-8 pm (Monarch Hall / Fireside Room / Campus Center 104 / Cafeteria Conference Room / Faculty Lounge) – Contact: Duane Smith

Think Transfer!

Wednesday, February 20
Mount St. Mary's rep 10am-1pm

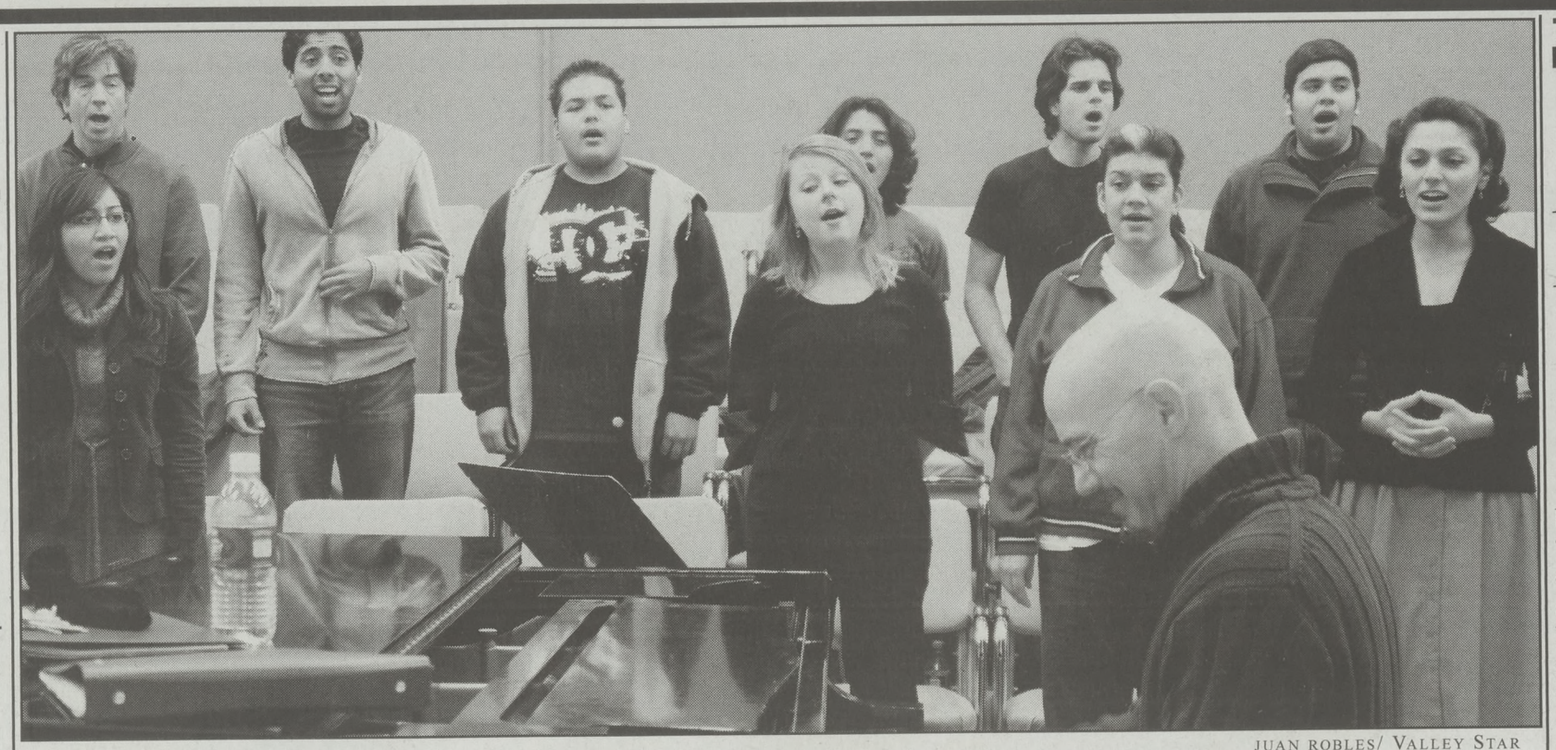
Thursday, February 21
UC Santa Barbara rep 10am-1pm
CSU Los Angeles rep 4pm-7pm

Monday, February 25
UC and CSU Financial Aid Workshop 1pm-2pm
How to Transfer Workshop 5:30pm-6:30pm

Tuesday, February 26
CSU Northridge rep 10am-1pm and 5pm-7pm
How to Transfer workshop 1pm-2pm

Wednesday, February 27
UC Los Angeles rep 9am-3pm
Undecided Major/Career Workshop 1pm-2pm

Additional content online - Go to www.lavalleystar.com



JUAN ROBLES/ VALLEY STAR

SING AWAY- The jazz choir directed by Glen Carlos are rehearsing "The Frim Fram Sauce" a song they will be performing this up Wednesday Feb. 20.

Music Fills the Halls at Valley with Free Concert

ELIZEDA BELTRAN
STAFF WRITER

Valley College students looking for something to do between classes or late at night can drown their ears in professional level music at Valley, minus the price.

The music department will entertain students and the community with its first concert series show, a faculty and student variety concert Feb. 20 that will kick off the four-month long concert series.

"In our culture, this is the dominant for of getting music," said Christian Nova, assistant professor and organizer of the concert series, while holding an iPod in the air. "A lot of young people are in their own little world, isolated. Live music is a completely different experience."

Students will enjoy an assortment of music styles on opening night ranging from choir, piano, jazz, classical, singing, and a guitar trio courtesy of faculty.

Jesenia Bernal, who will be part of the choir for the variety show explains her excitement, "The adrenaline rushes and then you say wow, there's a lot of people coming to see you, it's a special feeling."

Aside from offering 20 shows to choose from, the music department will also treat students and the community to free shows every other Wednesday. Students will not have to travel far, since the majority of the concerts will be held at Valley's Music Recital Hall and Mainstage Theatre.

"Nowadays, we don't really get a lot of exposure to live music, and what we hear on the radio and what is fed to us in television is not enough to broaden our horizons," said Erica Rey, who will be in the choir in the first show.

With music from Germany being a recurring theme, audiences will also enjoy pieces from Beethoven during symphony nights performed by the Valley Symphony Orchestra.

Judy Huang, a pianist who opened at Carnegie Hall, will also make an appearance during a free concert.

Students will also be able to enjoy from fellow student composers thanks to the Kadima String Quartet that is in residence this semester and will be offering a workshop for music students. Works by the students will be performed after the completion of the workshop.

Nova wants students to realize that "there is more than listening to music. Seeing [music] also contributes to the experience. You own it to yourself to experience a different kind of event."

The cost of tickets varies from $5 to $25. Students interested in attending a show can call the Music Department for more information.

Valley People

Valley Student takes a "Step Up" on the Big Screen

SHEILA KOOCHAK
STAFF WRITER

She stands at 5 feet 6 inches, without shoes, in a loose fitting black dress that comes to rest just above her knees and is sporting her favorite leather brown flat boots with buckles. Briana Evigan braided her long brown, layered hair over her shoulder and topped the outfit off with a grayish black hat and big, dark sunglasses to give her radiant hazel eyes some shade while she drives.

PAUL OLDEN PHOTO EDITOR/ VALLEY STAR

STEPPING UP- Former Valley College student Briana Evigan is one of the stars of the new dance movie "Step Up 2 the Streets" which opened as the second biggest money-maker over the President's Day weekend.

Leaving Marymount College and coming to Valley College could have been the greatest decision ever made by this young, fresh Hollywood talent. Landing the leading role in the newly released film, "Step Up 2 The Streets" right after winning the gold in a national tournament for the Valley Forensics Program changed Evigan's life.

"I love Valley College" Evigan said. "Valley's speech team definitely brought me out of my shell; actually being confident in walking into a class full of people."

While on the speech and debate team, she had a half-dozen auditions for the film. With hopes of getting the role, she took off to Houston, Texas for the 2007 Phi-Rho Pi National Championship Tournament and came home a champion, claiming a gold medal for her performance in drama. She says winning 1st place in the country is one of her proudest accomplishments.

"That was hard work. I put three years into it, so it really paid off," said Evigan, who earned her associate degree in speech communications at Valley. "It was definitely worth every minute of it and definitely one of the coolest experiences ever. It really kept me focused and wanting to go to school and it showed me how important education really is."

While moving on to bigger and better things, Evigan still sticks to her roots by coming to Valley and helping others achieve their dreams. She helps coach the speech team by giving any assistance needed in dancing, acting or movement with vocals and theatre. Her humble attitude is appreciated not only by her peers, but by many others.

Co-Director of speech and debate Duane W. Smith describes Evigan as "A natural performer with great ability to take direction. She's special and doesn't act like it."

Acting has always been a dream for Evigan, but her dream was made a reality two weeks after winning the gold when she was offered the lead role in "Step Up 2 The Streets."

Evigan was born and raised in the entertainment business, her father Greg Evigan was on television in the '80s starring in shows such as "My Two Dads" and "TekWar." Even though performing is in her blood, Evigan says she's glad she attended Valley and that her time at the school opened her eyes and heart to trying new things.

Although "Step Up 2 The Streets" was a big commitment, Evigan said she hopes to return to school in the near future to achieve her bachelor's, but for now, she's on the verge of filming an independent film called "Subject: I Love You."

The Silver Screen
By Joshua Spence

"Spiderwick" Is Guilty Pleasure for Young and Old

A first glance at the billboards and promo spots for "The Spiderwick Chronicles," one might mistake this film for a watered down "Chronicles of Narnia" or "Lords of the Rings" retread that should've been released four years ago when fantasy saga was all the rage.

While still in the same genre as "Narnia" or "Rings," "Spiderwick" is able to sidestep comparisons of the two by not having an "Encyclopedia Britannica's" worth of back story, mythos, ethos, and language that may be too daunting for younger viewers and too much effort for casual filmgoers. Instead, the film starts the action fast and lets you get acclimated with the magic as it happens.

Based on the novel of the same name, the Grace family relocates to New England from New York after the parents divorce, leaving a noticeable void in the lives of the three children. Mallory, the oldest continues to pursue her fencing hobby, Simon embraces the historic value of the old mansion and Jared lashes out by taking a vow of silence. After hearing random noises throughout the mansion, Jared comes to discover Arthur Spiderwick's Field Guide and all the magic/ danger that comes with it.

"Spiderwick" has solid casting with Mary McCormack, David Strathairn, and Joan Plowright adding depth and (some) realism to their roles. Nick Nolte looked like an ogre even before undergoing massive CGI and Martin Short's manic foil onscreen adds a sense of urgency to the story.

While Seth Rogen adds enough dudespeak and cool cache to keep older viewers invested, one misstep would be casting Freddie Highmore as the lead. He's the kid-actor flavor of the moment, but his British accent slips in a lot for a kid who's supposed to be from New England. This is a minor nuisance that the target audience probably won't be aware of.

Bottom line, "The Spiderwick Chronicles" is a great film to take a younger sibling to see or go see by yourself if you're into guilty pleasures. While this film and its potential sequels will probably be the next big thing for the tween/ young adult demographic, director Mark Waters hasn't read the hype. This film allows the viewer to sit back and enjoy it for what it is – a great children's book translated very well onto the silver screen.

Critics Notebook

Don't Judge a Movie By It's Hype or Ranking

BRAD TAYLOR
MANAGING EDITOR

My name is Brad and I am a journalism/media arts major and I have never seen "The Godfather," but I have watched "Xanadu" at least 20 times.

This shocking confession comes right in the middle of "awards season," when Hollywood decides which films deserve to be touted as the best, but please don't get caught up in the hype of publicists and the "Hollywood machine."

Have you seen "Atonement?" Neither have I, but when I read the trade magazines like "Variety" or "Entertainment Weekly" or watch any entertainment show "Extra" or anything on "E!" I feel almost dirty for having no desire to sit in a theatre and watch a movie based on a British romance novel.

When I shell out my hard earned money for a movie, I want to be entertained, not depressed or there because someone said I should be. If I go to a party and everyone is going on and on about "Juno," I don't want to feel like a pariah because I haven't seen it.

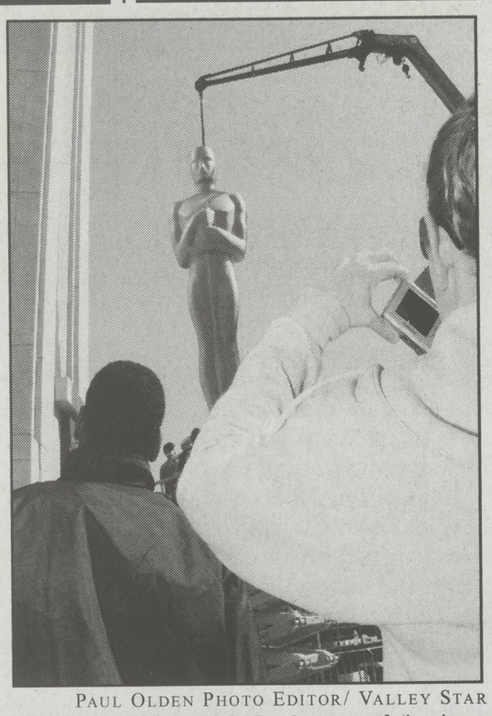
I am officially throwing off the shackles of the Oscar chains and declaring my love for films that I thought were actually worth paying to see. I would put "Superbad" against "Juno" any day; this is a teen film where the actors actually act like teenagers, not self-aware 30-somethings. If I want to see a movie based on a British novel I will go see "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix," at least then I know there will be magic and less crying.

We live in the land of movies with lists telling us what the best are. As a reviewer and sometime filmmaker, I often obsess on the things that I think I am supposed to see and not the movies I want to see. Said lists are just a general roadmap, not a GPS device; use them with a grain of salt and not as if they are the last word.

So I am letting you all know that it is ok to watch "Stomp the Yard" or any of it's hip-hop dancing, pseudo-inspirational MTV Film cousins. Admit you saw "Meet the Spartans" instead of "There Will Be Blood." There will always be time to discover that you love foreign films, just don't be bullied in aisles of Blockbuster.

If you really need a list to follow and check off, just go to the American Film Institutes' website (www.afi.com) and check out their top 100 movies. You will be happy to see films like "Star Wars," "Jaws," and "Forrest Gump" along with some time-tested classics.

Now if you will excuse me, I just saw that "The Godfather" is number two on that list and I must watch it before my advanced screenwriting class gets wind of my confession, but that copy of "Spice World" looks awfully tempting!



PAUL OLDEN PHOTO EDITOR/ VALLEY STAR

HANGING WITH OSCAR- As one of the large Oscar statues is put into its proper place in front of Hollywood's Kodak Theater.

Playoff Hopes Fade for Monarch Men

Late Season Slide Continues with Loss at Home

BY PAUL OLDEN
PHOTO EDITOR

The dream of playoff basketball seemed very real back on Feb. 2 after the Valley College men's team beat Santa Monica 78-69.

At that point in the season, the Monarchs had a 5-2 Western State Conference record and a post-season deal could be sealed with a strong finish to the regular season.

So much for that plan.

The Monarchs' conference losing streak reached four games after a stomach-churning 81-79 loss to unheralded College of the Canyons (8-18 2-8) at Valley College Saturday Feb. 16. It was the final home game on the schedule and very possibly the next to last game of the season overall for Valley whose record fell to 16-11 and 5-6 in the WSC.

Coach Virgil Watson wasn't thinking playoffs when he assessed his team's latest loss.

"If you're not going to win any games then what are the playoffs for," he said.

Valley's downfall against the Cougars was traced to a poor night from the free-throw line. The Monarchs made just 13 of 28 shots. Many of those misses occurred in the final five minutes of the game.

PAUL OLDEN / VALLEY STAR

IN TROUBLE - Valley College forward Shaun Johnson is covered tightly by College of the Canyon's Justin Smith (right) and Brian Kimble.

"We did a really poor job of shooting free-throws. That was the game." Watson said.

And, taking note of Canyons' 8-18 record, Watson said the visitors played loose and free of pressure.

"They have nothing to lose, they're not making the playoffs … they're just playing. We stopped playing [as a team] after we got a lead, we stopped playing together and things happened," he said.

But before the decisive late stages of the game, it looked like Valley, who trailed 38-37 at halftime, would hold off a determined Canyons team.

A basket by Shaun Johnson with 6:41 remaining in regulation gave Valley a 67-59 lead. Johnson was the game's high scorer with 24 points.

But the Monarchs' defense lapsed and allowed the Cougars to go on a 14-4 run. The come-from-behind charge was capped off by a three-point basket by Jason Holzwarth which put the Cougars ahead 73-72 with 2:44 remaining. It was a lead they would not give up.

Key free-throw misses by Gino Riney, Demetrius Malone and Johnson were countered by Canyon's Justin Smith who made three critical free-throws in the game's waning moments to keep the Cougars just out of the Monarchs' reach.

Still, Valley had some chances in the frenetic final seconds of the game. Down 80-79 with 7 seconds to go, Germel Coleman missed a lay-up attempt under pressure. After fouling the Cougars' Jason Holzwarth —who made one of two free-throws— the Monarchs had another offensive opportunity, but Coleman, who was guarded tightly, launched an off-target 16-foot jumper from the right of the key as time ran out and the Monarchs had to absorb the 81-79 loss.

Full-Court Press:

• The ten sophomore players on the Valley roster and their families were honored before the game.

• Valley College was among several schools listed in "Sports Illustrated" as running a popular offensive attack that is similar to the one being used to great success by the top-ranked Memphis Tigers' men's team.

• In the first game of the double-header, the lady Monarchs lost 102-92 to College of the Canyons. It was Valley's fourth loss in the last five games.

SCOREBOARD

Baseball

Feb. 18	Runs	Hits	Errors
VALLEY	10	19	0
CERRITOS	4	11	0

Men's Basketball

Feb. 16	1st	2nd	Final
C.O.C.	38	43	81
VALLEY	37	42	79

Softball

Feb. 18	Runs	Hits	Errors
VALLEY	2	--	--
RIVERSIDE	10	--	--

Women's Basketball

Feb. 16	1st	2nd	Final
C.O.C.	--	--	102
VALLEY	--	--	92

Baseball Team Raids Moorpark Pitching Staff

BY DENNIS ALAMINA
STAFF WRITER

The Valley College Monarchs baseball squad came out intent on playing a complete game and took out the Moorpark College Raiders on Feb. 15 with an 18-7 victory.

Valley's defense shut down Moorpark early with a scoreless top of the first inning.

In the bottom half of the inning centerfielder Angel Nunez hit a single to score second baseman Justin Kaid from third. Later in the inning, third baseman Dominic Necuechea doubled, but Nunez had to stop at third. But right fielder Mike Calahan singled scoring Necuechea and Nunez increasing the Monarchs lead to 3-0.

Going into the bottom of the third inning, the Monarchs still held Moorpark scoreless and Valley puts in two more runs with Kaid and Nunez once again leading the charge by dominating with runs.

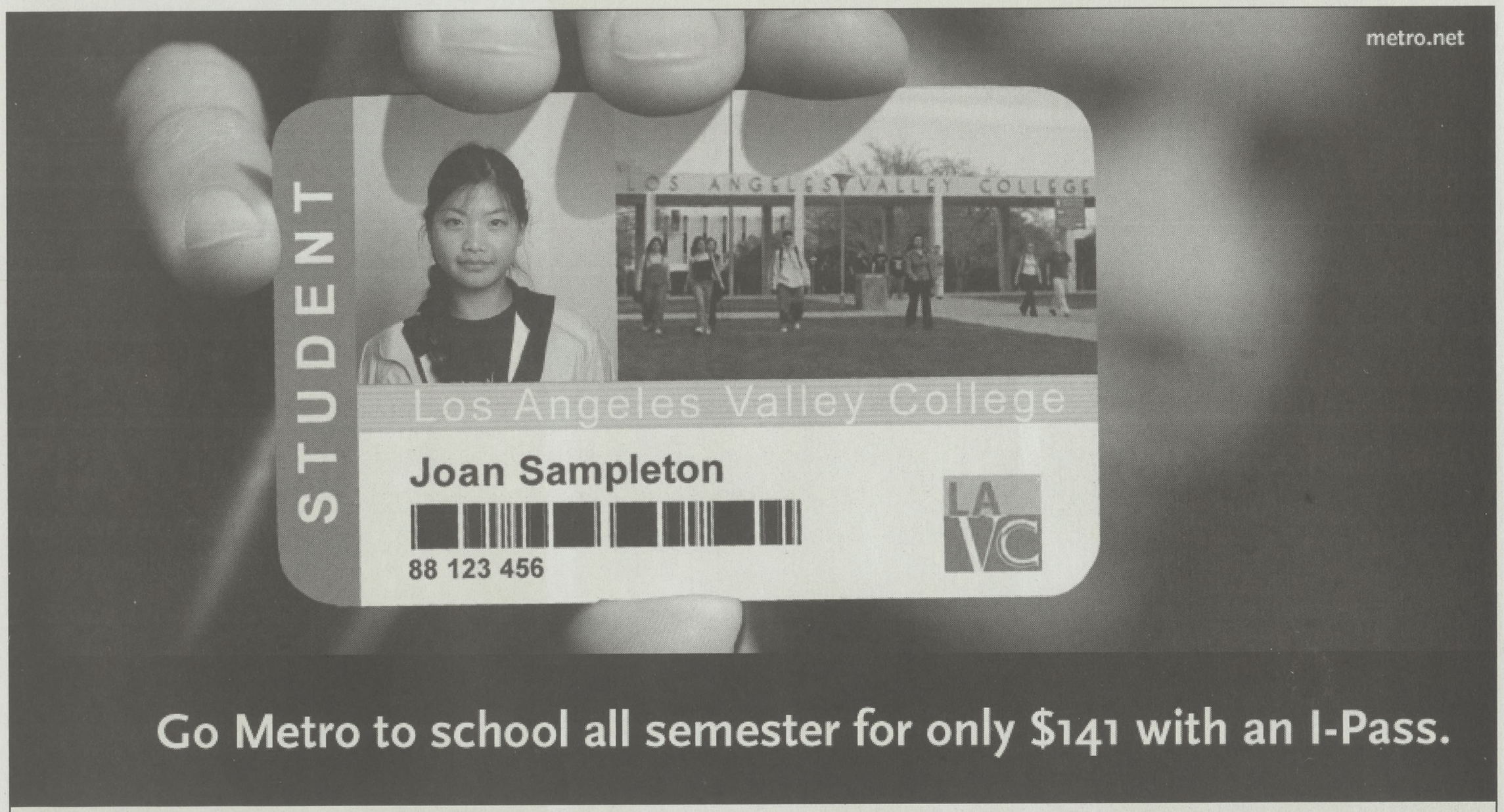
Starting pitcher Martin Sarabia stopped the Raiders all day as he struck out a majority of the batters he faced, holding them scoreless.

As the Monarchs went into the bottom of the fourth inning Necuechea scored again, now 6-0, right behind him on third base, left fielder Shelby Hunt hit a single and stole a base, which got center fielder Mitch Garcia to the plate and gave them a 7-0 lead.

By the fifth inning, Calahan, Hunt and first baseman Jimmy Duran scored three more runs and short stop J.P. Hollywood doubled in a fourth to make it 10-0.

Jason Kane finished the game on the mound for the Monarchs. By the sixth inning the Raiders scored seven, but they were not able to come back, with Valley still putting runs on the board, totaling 18. Hollywood hit an eighth inning home run and had two doubles and three RBI, making him arguably the player of the game.

Manager Dave Mallas said, "This has been the best game we've played, with full energy and great expectations."



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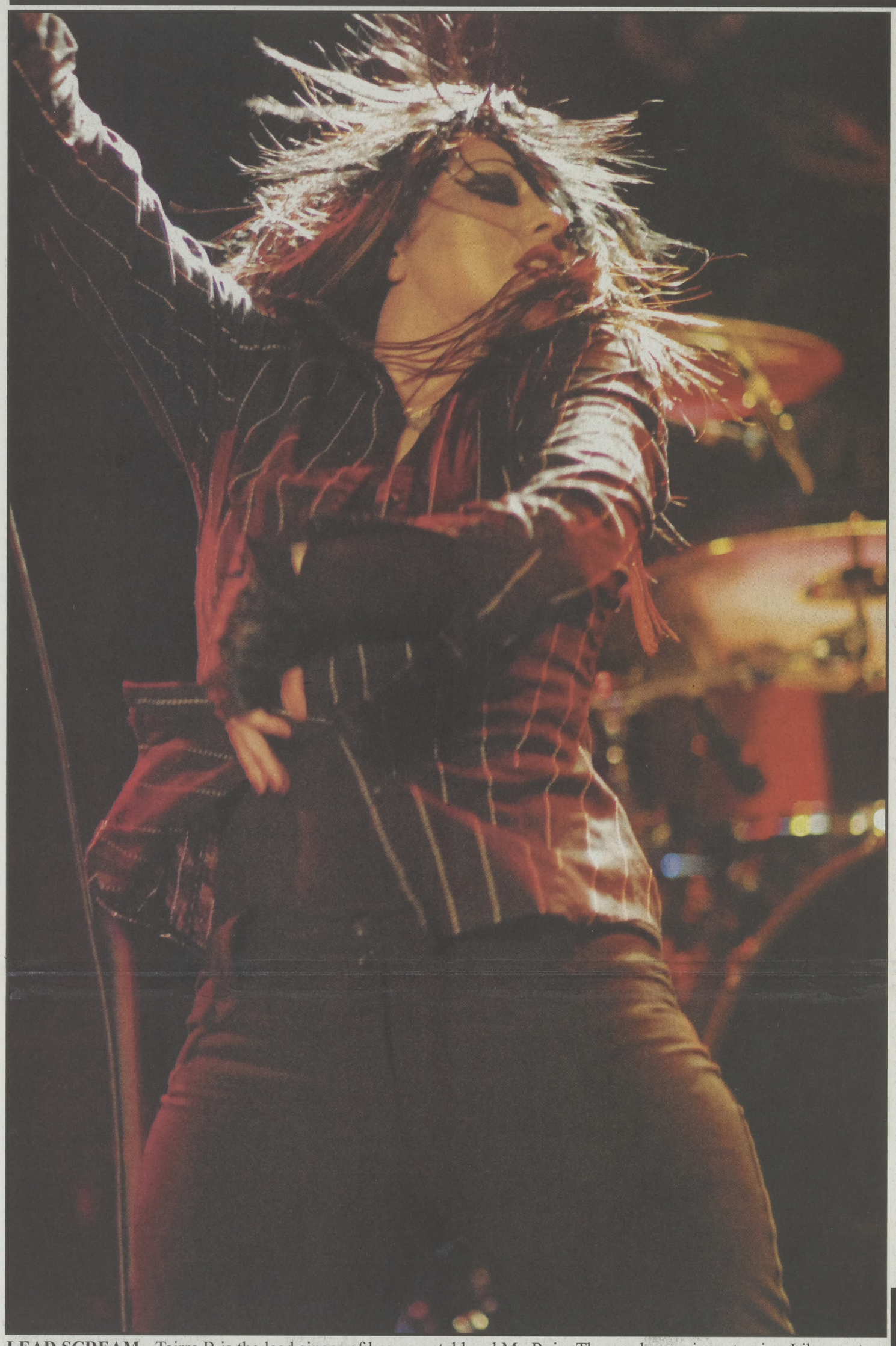
Metro

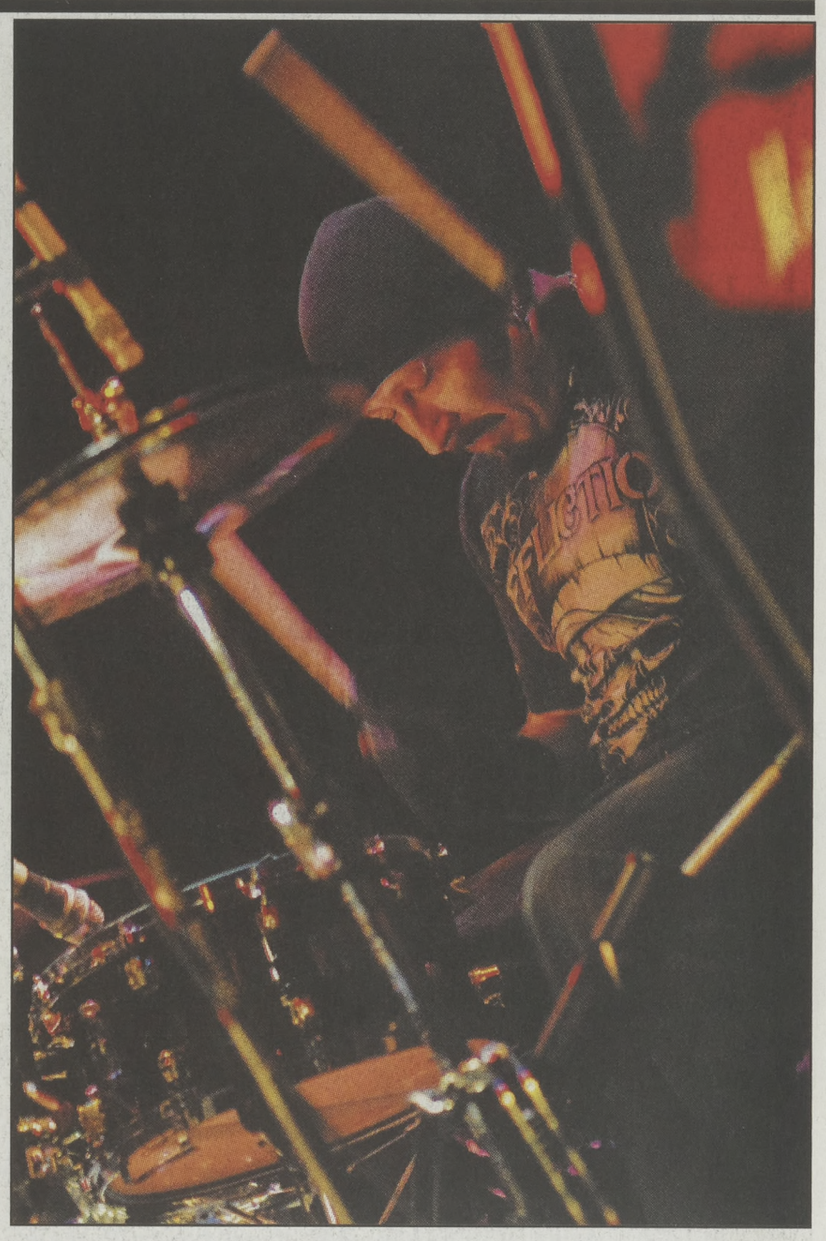
Let Metro make getting to school easy. There's an Orange Line station right next to Valley College, as well as numerous bus lines. To plan your best way to school, visit the Trip Planner at *metro.net*.

Metro's I-Pass is available now at the campus Business Office.

GALLERY



LEAD SCREAM - Tairre B is the lead singer of heavy metal band My Ruin. They make music, not noise. Like most bands, their voice and creative direction is their own.



HARD HITTING - Marcelo Palomino hits a tranquil note.

My Ruin Rocks Whisky A Go Go

Photo and Text by Scott Mitchell
Staff Photographer

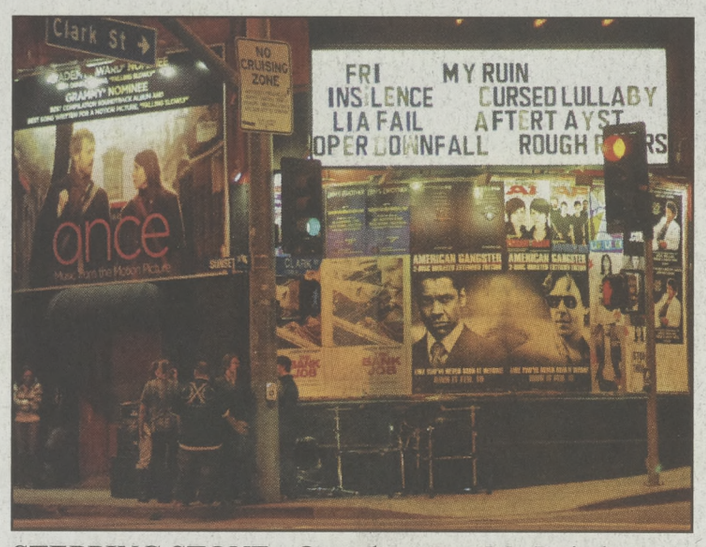
Local heavy metal band, My Ruin tore things up before a packed house at the Whisky A Go Go on the Sunset Strip recently. The band treated their fans to cuts from their newly-released fifth album titled, "Throat Full of Heart."

Their sound is heavy and their style is easy to be a part of. Their live performances are tight and the band's musicality is impressive.

Valley Star staff photographer Scott Mitchell shows us the headbanging photos from the sweaty mosh pit.

DRIVING FORCE - Mick Murphy captivates the crowd with his guitar sound and stage presence.

HEAVY BASS - Chris Lisee lead rhythm.



STEPPING STONE - Over the years, My Ruin has established a genuine bond and affinity with the Whisky.

HAPPY TO BE ALIVE - After surviving a near fatal car accident last Fall she is happy to be back on stage.